been forced to reduce its network drastically in various States of the country. There is no proposal to restore these services at the present juncture.

Cancellation of SAARC Summit

330. SHRI G. G. SWELL:

DR. BAPU KALDATE:

SHRI SHANKAR DAYAL SINGH:

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI:

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA:

SHRI N. E. BALARAM:

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA:

SHRI MOHINDER SINGH LATHER:

SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the SAARC Summit in Colombo scheduled for the 7th November has been postponed;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and whether this postponement would weaken the SAARC as a movement;

(c) by when and where the 6th SAARC Summit will take place and what steps Government propose to take to strengthen the SAARC movement;

(d) whether SAARC was established under any Charter or Agreement of the concerned seven States;

(e) whether the Charter enjoins that in the event of any Head of Government being unable to attend the summit the same would have to be called off; and

(f) what are the reasons that pre-summit meetings were not attended by Foreign Secretary and Minister of External Affairs at their level?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The current Chairman of SAARC, President Gayoom of the Maldives, held extensive consultations with SAARC leaders on the Summit, in view of the inability of His Majesty the King of Bhutan to attend the meeting on the dates scheduled (7—9 Novmeber 1991). On the basis of these discussions, the Chairman came to the conclusion that the Summit cannot be held on schedule since Bhutan would not be represented at the Heads of State/Government level. The postponement will not in any way weaken SAARC.

(c) Maldives is carrying out consultations with Member States concerning fresh dates for the Sixth SAARC Summit in Colombo. The Foreign Minister of the Maldives visited New Delhi on 19—21 November in this connection.

The Government of India will continue to promote SAARC cooperation in all areas.

(d) Yes, Sir. The SAARC Charter was adopted on 8 December 1985.

(e) Articles III and X of the SAARC Charter have a bearing on this question. Article III provides that "Heads of State/Government meet once a year or more often as and when considered necessary by the Member States". Article X provides that decisions "shall be taken on the basis of unanimity".

(f) They were unable to go on account of other pressing engagements. In keeping with established SAARC practice and procedures, the Minister of State for External Affairs participated in the meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers and an Additional Secretary took part in the meetings of the Standing Committee of officials.